

## ITM jointly receives Digitalisation for Development prize

This innovative initiative brings better access to quality health services to people in the rural district of Kingandu, DRC.

26-10-20



Dit is de omschrijving

**ITM was recognised with the 'D4D - Digitilisation for Development' prize in October for its joint project 'Smart Glasses 4 Health' in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Through the use of a tele-health solution, the innovative initiative brings better access to quality health services to people in the rural district, Kingandu. The project is a collaboration between Memisa and technical partners Iristick and Avanti. ITM alumna Elies Van Belle (Director of Memisa) and Steven Serneels (Iristick) received the award from the freshly appointed Minister for Development Cooperation, Meryame Kitir.**

Memisa, a Belgian medical not-for-profit, is implementing the Smart Glasses 4 Health project in DRC since 2019. The high-tech smart glasses include a camera, a microphone and speakers, which are linked to a smart phone. Using the glasses, nurses and midwives in remote health centres can get live advice from a medical doctor in the district hospital during consultations. When a patient needs referral to the hospital, a motorcycle-ambulance transports the patient. In contrast to tablets and laptops, the smart glasses allow consultants to work hands free. The project integrates different strategies to improve patient care and make better referrals.

"ITM worked closely with Memisa and its partners in the design and running of the pilot project in three health centres in Kingandu," says Wim Van Damme, Professor of Health Policy at ITM, who visited the project area to start the impact evaluation of the innovation. "Till now, the results have been quite positive with patients receiving better and more timely health care in these remote areas of the DRC; especially the reliability of the referrals seems to have improved. The smart glasses and the motorcycle ambulances contribute greatly to overcome communication and transport challenges, but these remain substantial obstacles for better health care in such remote areas. Local health authorities, the health workers and the health committees have shown great enthusiasm for the project and its further development. We have set up a mixed-methods evaluation, to learn more lessons on the impact, the reproducibility and the potential scale-up of such digital innovation, which is still ongoing."

The Smart Glasses 4 Health Project won the D4D prize in the iStandOut category. This prize recognises success stories in digitalisation in development with a strong vision of future viable partnerships. The D4D prize is an initiative of the Africa Museum and the Belgian Development Cooperation.